

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICENATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED 10/30/80

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTREES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

## 1 NAME

HISTORIC

Grace Church, Ca Ira (Preferred)

AND/OR COMMON

Grace Episcopal Church

## 2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER  
Route 632

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Ca Ira

X VICINITY OF

Fifth (W. C. Daniel)  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Virginia

CODE  
51

COUNTY

Cumberland

CODE  
045

## 3 CLASSIFICATION

## CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT  
☒ BUILDING(S)☐ STRUCTURE  
☐ SITE  
☐ OBJECT

## OWNERSHIP

☐ PUBLIC  
☒ PRIVATE☐ BOTH

## PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS  
☐ BEING CONSIDERED

## STATUS

☐ OCCUPIED☒ UNOCCUPIED☐ WORK IN PROGRESS

## ACCESSIBLE

☒ YES: RESTRICTED  
☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED  
☐ NO

## PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE☐ MUSEUM☐ COMMERCIAL☐ PARK☐ EDUCATIONAL☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE☐ ENTERTAINMENT☒ RELIGIOUS☐ GOVERNMENT☐ SCIENTIFIC☐ INDUSTRIAL☐ TRANSPORTATION☐ MILITARY☐ OTHER

## 4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Board of Trustees, Grace Episcopal Church, C/o Mr. Richard Couture,  
President

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Route 1, Box 77

CITY, TOWN

Goochland

XXXXXX  
VICINITY OF

STATE

Virginia 23063

## 5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE.  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC

Cumberland County Courthouse

STREET &amp; NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Cumberland

STATE

Virginia

## 6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS (3) (See Continuation Sheet #1)

TITLE

(1) Historic American Buildings Survey Inventory

DATE

1957

☒ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Library of Congress

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE  
D.C.

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Calendar of Virginia State Papers, Vol. 9, p. 223 (1801) p. 351 (1803).  
Cary, Mary and Engle, Diane. "Grace Episcopal Church." Class Project, University of  
Virginia Architecture School, Fall 1973.  
Cumberland County Deed Book 25, p. 494 (1843); Land Tax Books, 1782-1850; Legislative  
Petitions 1814-1850; Will Books 12, 13.  
Minutes of the Grace Episcopal Church. Ca Ira Restoration Association, 1928-31, 1954-78.  
Plat of the Ca Ira Canal, 1825, Virginia State Library. (See Continuation Sheet #2)

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 2/3 acre

QUADRANGLE NAME Hillcrest, Virginia

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A 17 736170 4151640

B         

C         

D         

E         

F         

G         

H         

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at a point on N side of Route 632 about  
1100' W of intersection with Route 652; thence extending about 100' W along  
said side; thence extending about 250' N; thence extending about 100' E; thence  
extending about 250' S to N side of Route 632, point of origin.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
-------	------	--------	------

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
-------	------	--------	------

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff

ORGANIZATION

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE

June 1980

STREET & NUMBER

221 Governor Street

TELEPHONE

(804) 786-3144

CITY OR TOWN

Richmond

STATE

Virginia 23219

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL   

STATE X

LOCAL   

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I  
hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the  
criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE Tucker Hill, Executive Director  
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE JUN 17 1980

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

ATTEST: KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

Grace Church, Ca Ira, Cumberland County, Virginia

CONTINUATION SHEET

#1

ITEM NUMBER 6,7,& 8 PAGE 1

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS:**

- (2) Historic American Buildings Survey  
1973 Federal  
Library of Congress/Washington, D. C.
- (3) Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey  
1968, 1969, 1980 State  
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission  
221 Governor Street  
Richmond, Virginia 23219

**7. DESCRIPTION - BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:**

The nominated property consists of two-thirds of an acre (approximately) and includes the church cemeteries and church building. The acreage follows the lines of the original deed as recorded in the Cumberland County Deed Book 25, p. 494 (November 12, 1843):

a certain lot or parcel of ground adjoining the town of Ca Ira on the West, and bounded as follows. Orig. on the South by the Main road from Ca Ira to Buckingham Ct. House, West by the line separating it from McAshan's Old Stemmer Lot, on which the fence now runs North by the road leading into said stemmer and, East by the Western Crop Street of the town of Ca Ira, it being the lot, as now enclosed whereon the New Episcopal Church, called Grace Church, has been recently erected, containing about two thirds of an acre, together with all the appurtenances thereunto belonging.

RCC

**8. SIGNIFICANCE:**

and is listed with Cosby as "architect" on the courthouse cornerstone. Cosby had earlier worked under Thomas Jefferson at the building of the University of Virginia, but Parrish's connection to Jefferson is unknown. The use of Greek Revival-style architraves and the design of the pulpit in Grace Church

(See Continuation Sheet #2)

DESIGN FOR A PULPIT

PL. 63

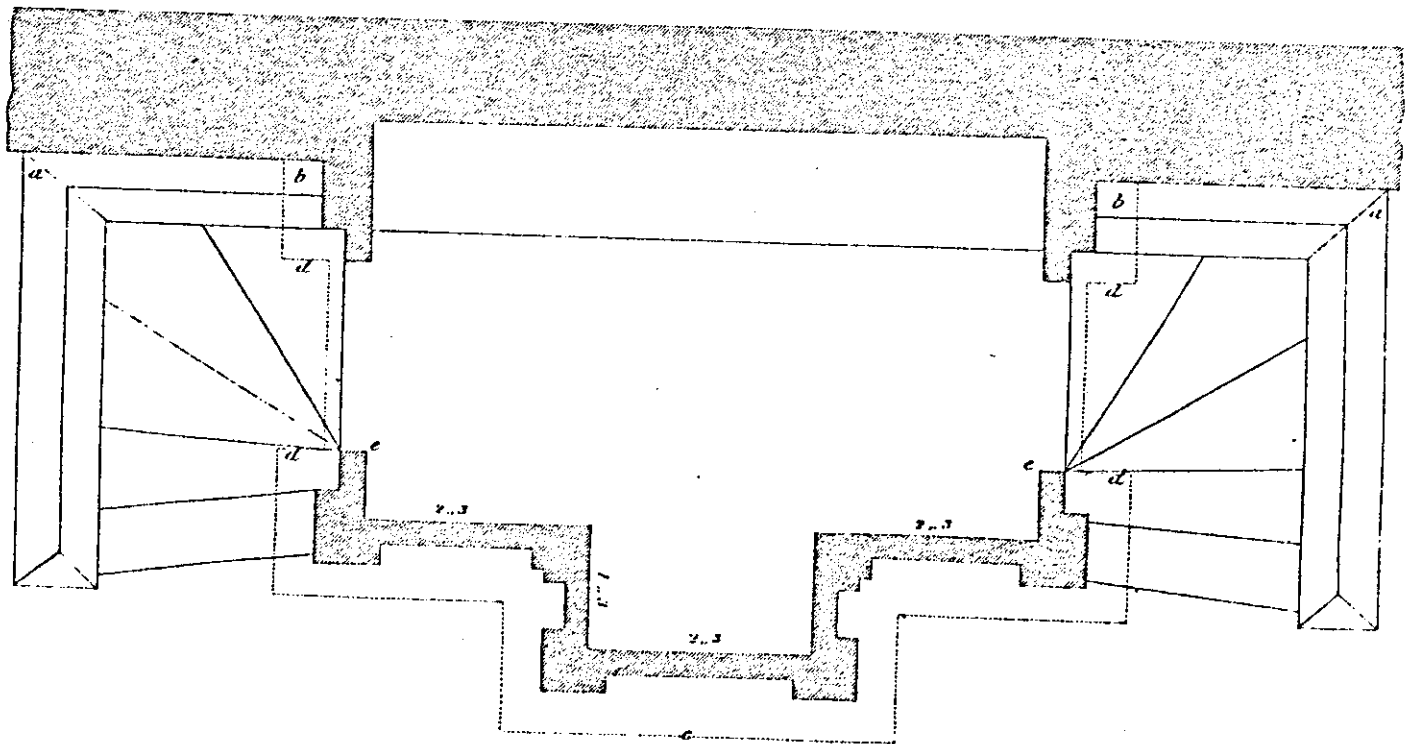
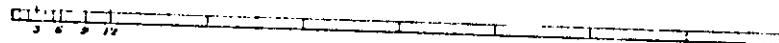
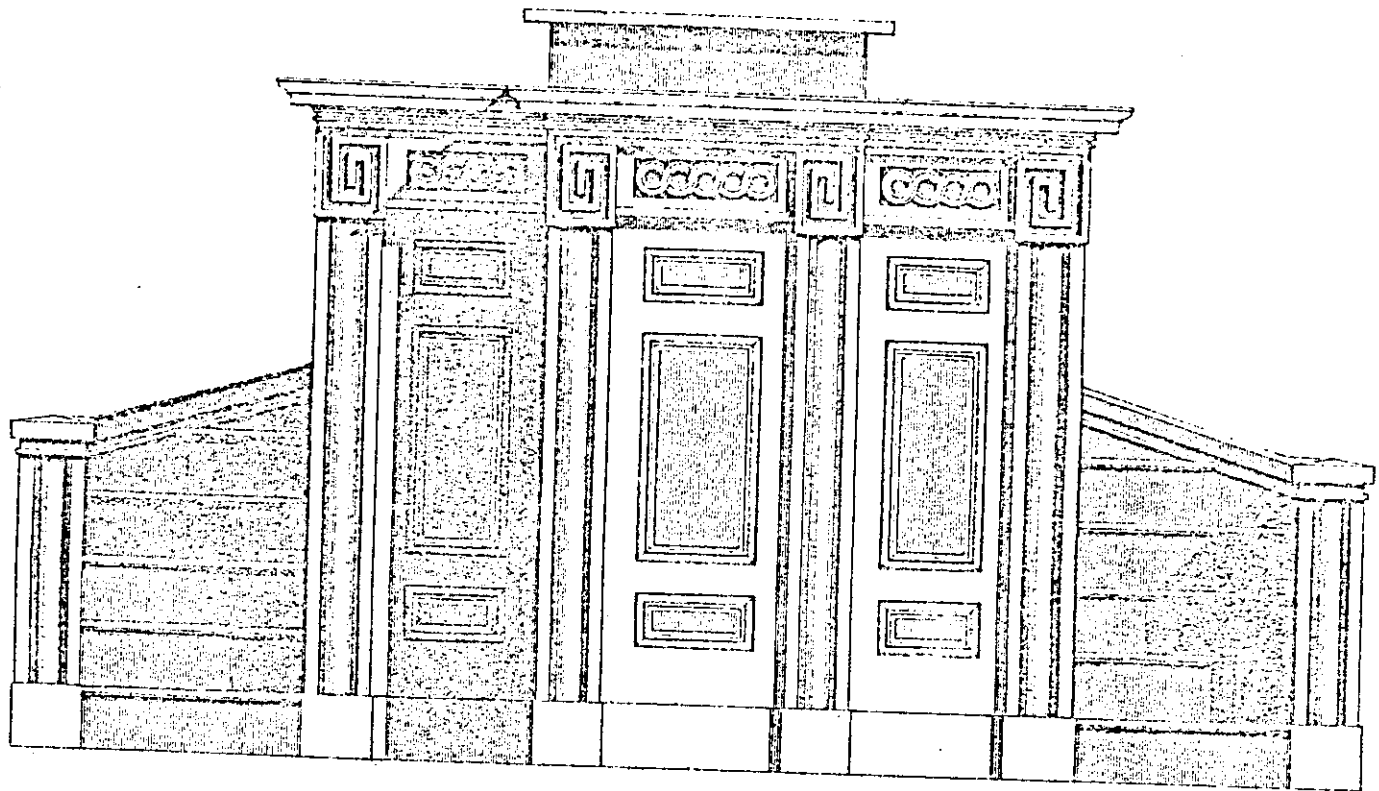


Plate 64: Benjamin, Asher. Practical House Carpenter. 1830.

Fig. 1

PL. 64.

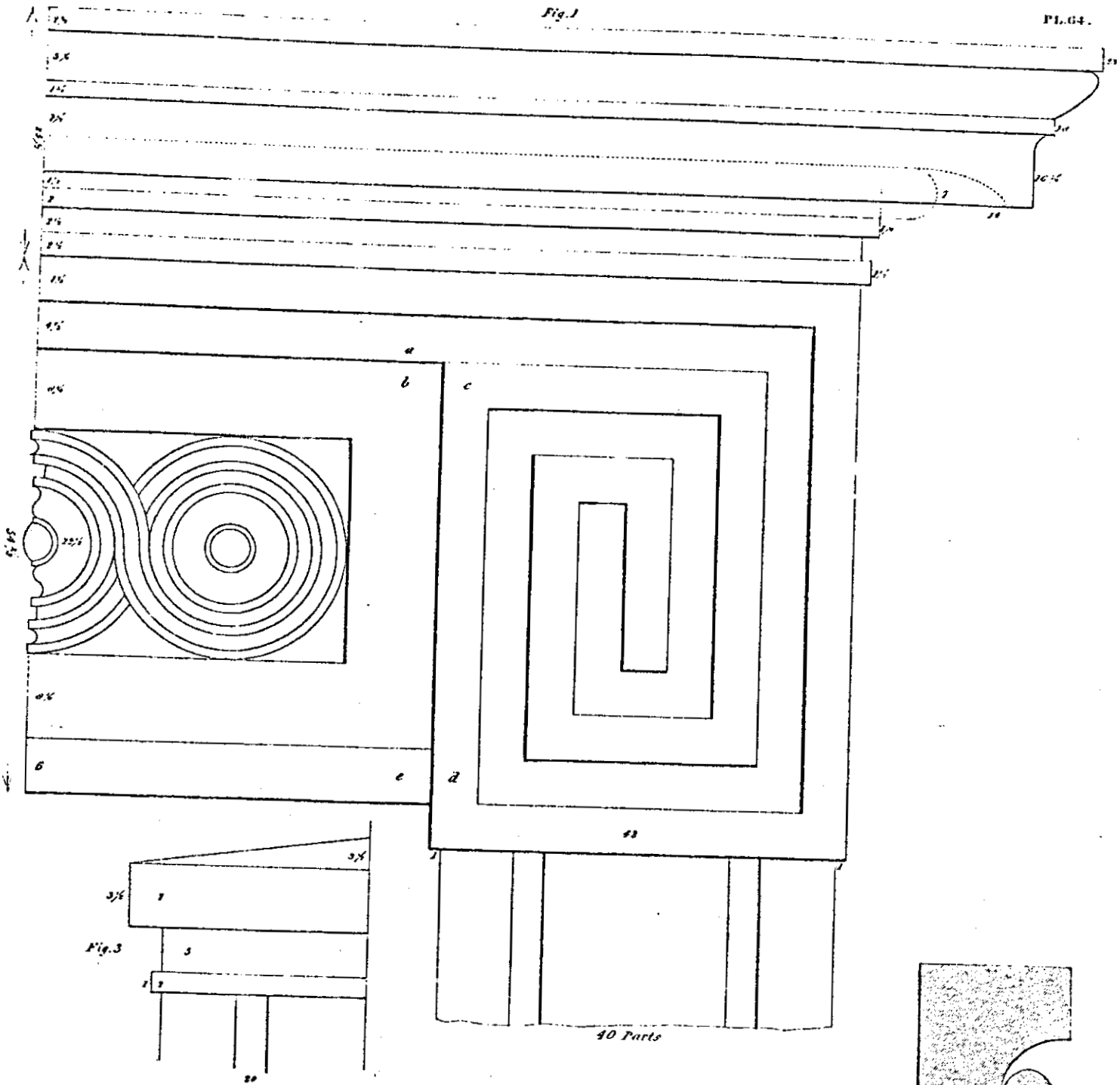


Fig. 2

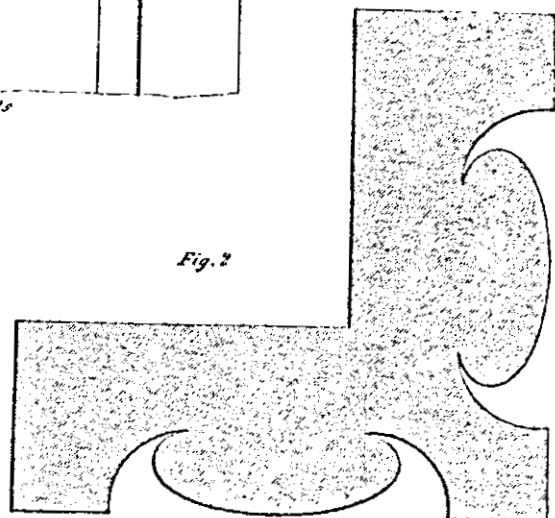
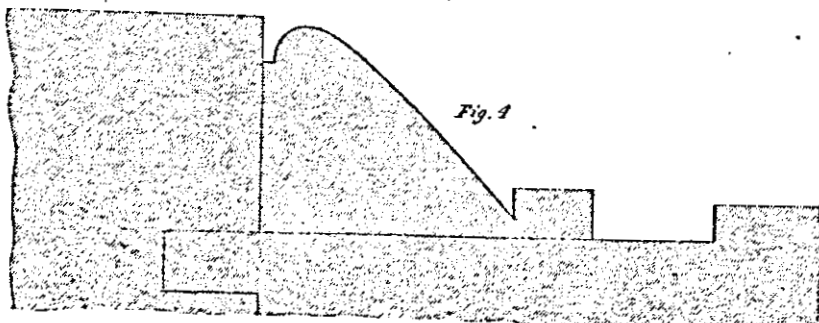
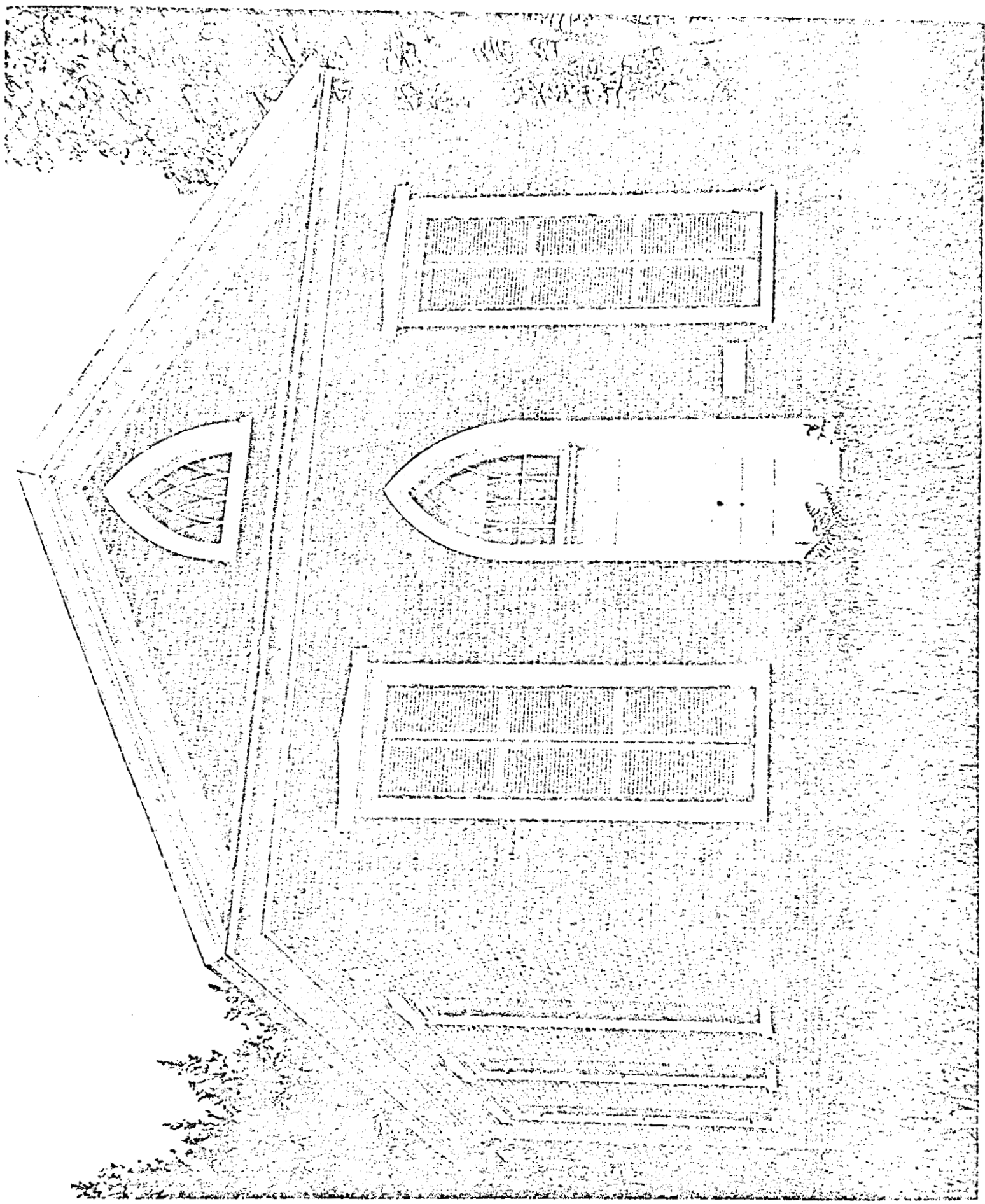
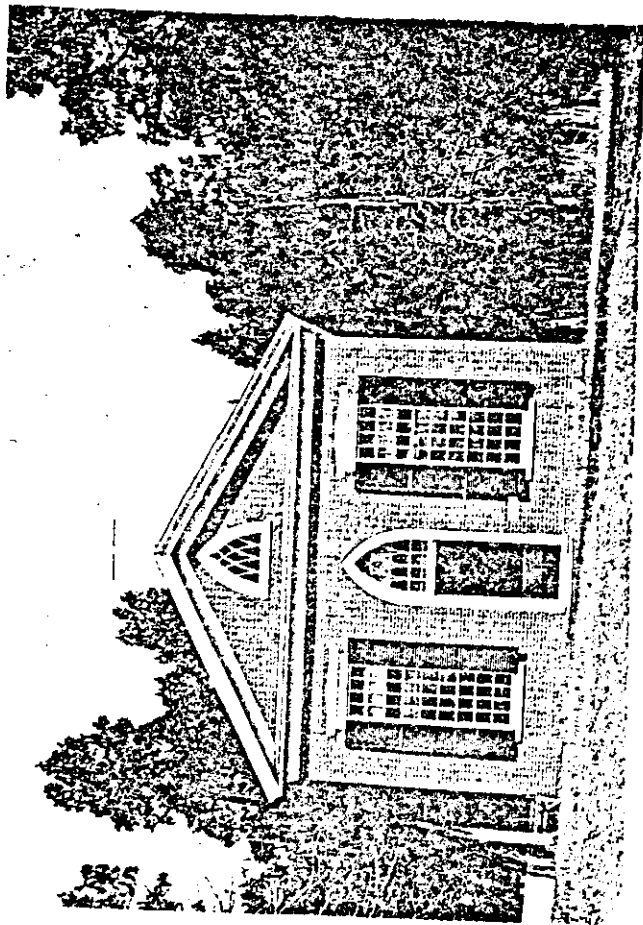


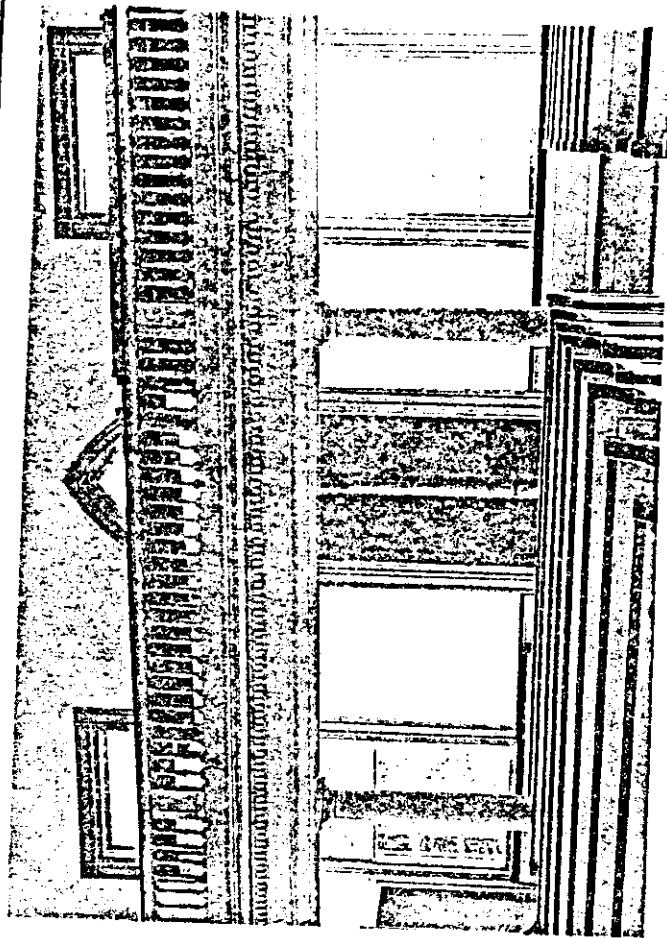
Fig. 4



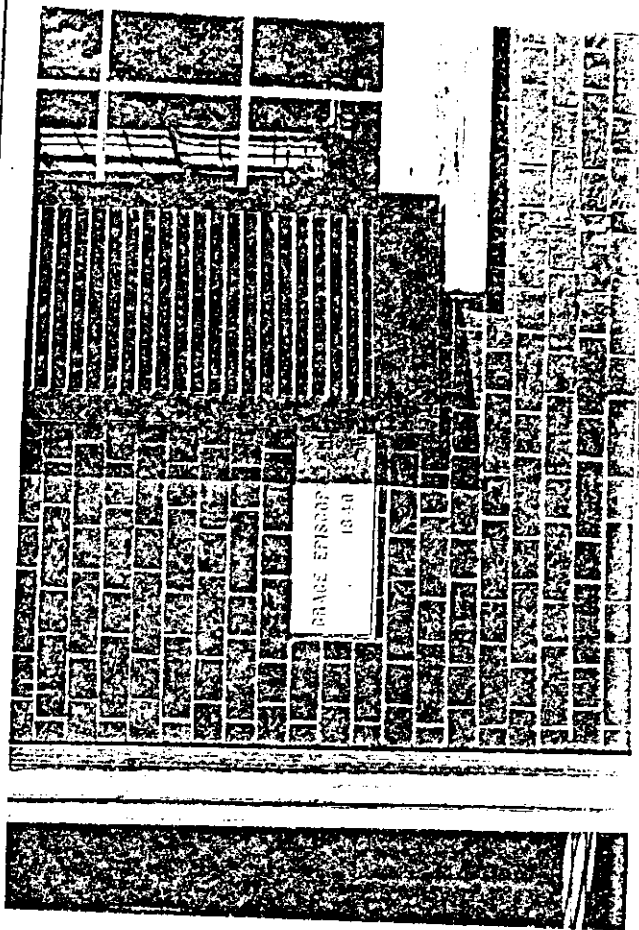
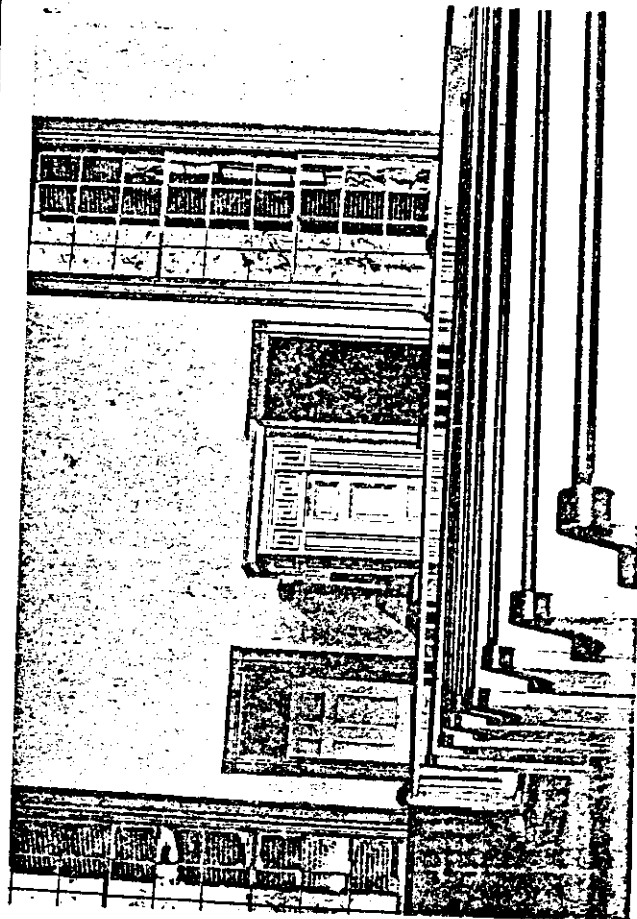




South (main) Elevation  
Pulpit, North Wall



Gallery  
Detail, Exterior Marker





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HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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Grace Church, Ca Ira, Cumberland County, Virginia

CONTINUATION SHEET

#2

ITEM NUMBER 8 & 9 PAGE 2, 1

8. SIGNIFICANCE:

show the influence of Asher Benjamin's Practical House Carpenter of 1830. The pulpit design is taken specifically from Plate 52 and Plates 63-64 of Benjamin's pattern book. One of the Parrish's slaves, Albert Kann, is said to have been responsible for the woodwork and framing. Parrish was a leading citizen of Cumberland County during the 1840s and 1850s. He signed and presented several petitions to the General Assembly on questions of tolls and economic aid to the county.

Ca Ira reached its zenith in the mid-1850s (when the town incorporated its first and only bank), only to decline rapidly in population after the Civil War. Grace Church fell into desuetude and, like many other buildings in the town, was abandoned at the end of the 19th century. Listed as a "post hamlet" in the Lippincott World Gazetteer in 1906, the town at the beginning of the 20th century had only two stores, a post office, and a few residences, apart from the abandoned church building and the remnants of a tobacco warehouse, three blacksmith shops, a saw mill, a grist mill, and a miller's house. Except for the church building, only the miller's house stands today.

Not until 1928 did descendants of the original congregation of Grace Church organize the Ca Ira Restoration Society, which raised the funds to rehabilitate and restore the church soon thereafter. After blocking an attempt by the Diocese to sell the property, the Society in 1954 successfully reinstituted the annual homecoming services which had been held regularly in the 1930s. The Society has since maintained the church and grounds in good repair. To preserve its present status as a "shrine" of the Diocese of Southern Virginia, Grace Church must hold at least one religious service a year.

MTP/RCC/RAC

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Benjamin, Asher. Practical House Carpenter. 1830.  
Lippincott World Gazetteer. 1906.  
Martin, Joseph. A New and Comprehensive Gazetteer of Virginia and the District of Columbia. Charlottesville, Va., 1836.



## DESCRIPTION

### CONDITION

☒ EXCELLENT  
☐ GOOD  
☐ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED  
☐ RUINS  
☐ UNEXPOSED

### CHECK ONE

☒ UNALTERED  
☐ ALTERED

### CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE  
☐ MOVED      DATE \_\_\_\_\_

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Grace Church is located on the north side of Route 632, just south of U.S. Route 60, in the middle of Cumberland County. The brick structure was constructed 1840-43 and is a well-preserved example of Roman, Greek, and Gothic Revival elements on a temple-form country church. Its outside dimensions are approximately 32' x 48' with a small vestry attached at the rear.

The church sits on a brick foundation with air holes for ventilation. The walls are constructed of even-colored 3" x 8" unglazed, hand-packed bricks with very precise mortar joints. The south (front) and east sides are both of Flemish bond, the north side is of five-course American bond, and the west side is of four-course American bond with Flemish variant. The mortar joints preserve original penciling.

Triple-hung windows with 12/12 sash are found on all elevations. The windows are hung with louvred shutters and 8" rectilinear moldings topped by ramped lintels. The lintels have 6"-square corner blocks. Above the entrance is a lancet transom with intersecting tracery, and the window in the tympanum is similarly treated. The first bay on the east side is a jib window which is said to have been used for funerals. A handsome cove cornice runs along the perimeter of the roof and defines the front and rear pediments. The roof is covered by Buckingham slate. Two small chimneys are later additions, as is a small wooden cross above the pediment.

The interior is a single room with the vestry in a later addition behind the sanctuary. The nave has two main aisles formed by the placement of the original pews. The freestanding set of center pews is larger than the side pews, which are slightly angled and attached to the side walls. The gallery on the south wall has one center aisle and two side aisles. Two Doric columns and pilasters on the side walls support the gallery. Above the columns is a dentiled entablature topped by a railing with turned balusters. An enclosed stairway on the east side of the building leads to the gallery. On one side of the stair is beaded diagonal paneling. There is no stair rail.

On the north wall is the pulpit, enclosed in a U-shaped communion rail with rectangular rungs. The pulpit is paneled and has a bold Greek fret in the frieze, reflecting the use of plates 52, 63, and 64 of Asher Benjamin's Practical House Carpenter (1830) in its design. A marble baptismal font is located to the east of the pulpit.

Still in place in the church are two elaborate cast-iron, wood-burning stoves, bearing the maker's name, "Leibrandt & McDowell, Philadelphia & Baltimore." A paneled dado with a chair rail runs the perimeter of the main room. The flooring is of unfinished wood, and the walls and ceilings are plastered.

A small cemetery is located to the rear (north) of the church, which is sited in a hilly, wooded area just above Ca Ira pond on the Willis River.

RCC

(See Continuation Sheet #1)

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1840-43

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Col. Valentine Parrish w/ Albert Mann

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

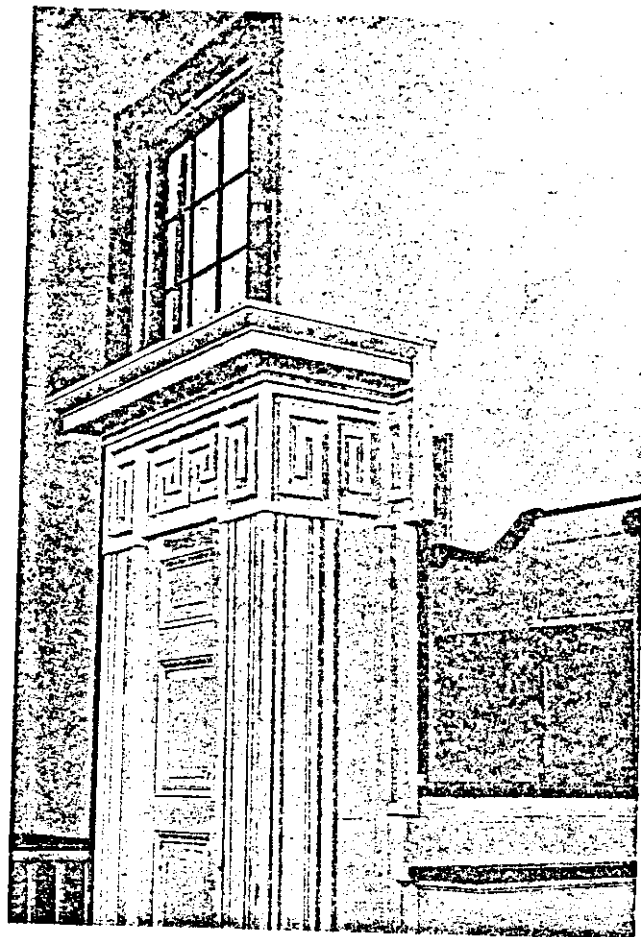
Grace Church, Ca Ira, survives as a charming illustration of the stylistic hybridization that occurred with Romantic Revivalism in the antebellum period. Unlike many of its similarly imaginative contemporaries, Grace Church is devoid of architectural naivete and is at once a skillful blending of Roman, Greek, and Gothic Revival elements, all executed with superb craftsmanship. Its temple form and fine brickwork are an offspring of Virginia's Jeffersonian tradition, while its Greek and Gothic details are adapted from builders' pattern books. The church was erected in 1840-43 by Valentine Parrish, a local master builder, and is one of the only remaining buildings of Ca Ira, a town laid out in 1787 which prospered briefly in the antebellum period as a milling and tobacco warehouse center.

The General Assembly established Ca Ira in 1796 on a site overlooking the Willis River in Cumberland County. The town probably took its name from a popular French revolutionary marching song meaning "it will go" or "the Revolution will triumph." Since popular enthusiasm for the French Revolution was especially exuberant in Virginia throughout the 1790s, it is plausible that this enthusiasm found expression in the naming of the new town. Ca Ira failed to develop until the completion of the Willis River canal in 1825. Besides ridding the town of an unhealthful pond, the canal facilitated the shipment of tobacco from Prince Edward and Charlotte counties to Richmond and Petersburg via the James River. Commerce quickened as a class of merchants arose in the town. Martin's Gazetteer of 1836 described Ca Ira as a post village with a population of 210. According to the gazetteer, the town then contained forty dwellings, three stores, a merchant mill processing approximately thirty thousand bushels of wheat annually, a tobacco warehouse, two taverns, and a masonic hall.

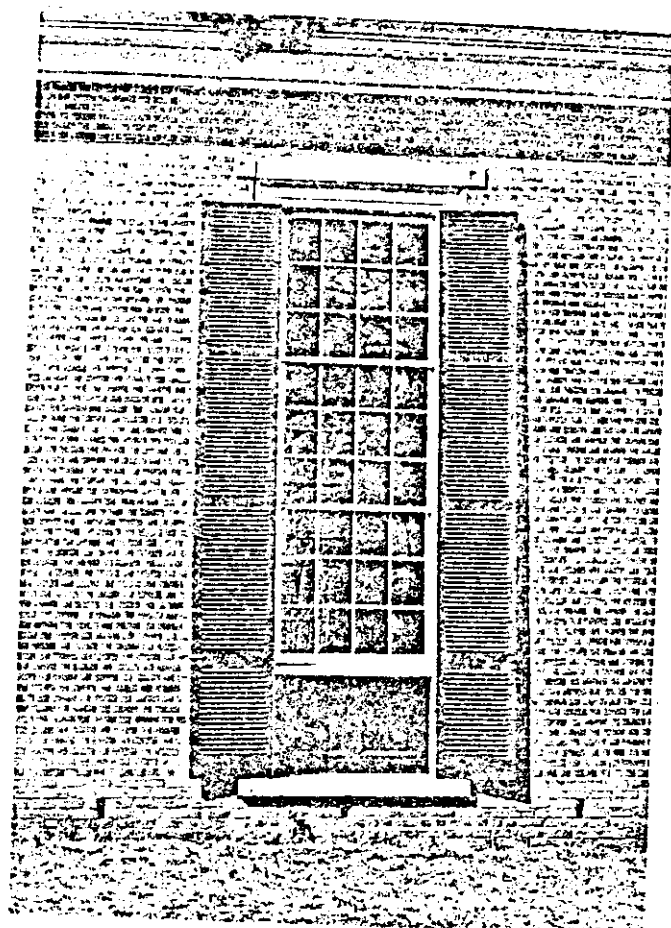
Completion of Grace Church in 1843 not only gave Ca Ira its largest and most distinguished building, it also brought new life to surrounding Littleton parish, which had been inactive since 1813. Bishop William Meade reported in 1857 that the church was "in constant use," serving both the town community and the neighboring Cumberland plantations. The pillars of the church were the most prominent families of the town: the John C. Pages, Alexander Trents, Cary Blantons, Goodrich Wilsons, and Valentine Parrishes, who donated the lot on which the new church was erected. The transformation of Littleton from an inactive to a flourishing parish reflected in a small mirror the larger revival of the Episcopal Church in Virginia in the decades just prior to the Civil War.

Builder as well as benefactor of Grace Church, Valentine Parrish worked with Dabney Cosby on the Jeffersonian-style Goochland County Courthouse of 1826

(See Continuation Sheet #1)

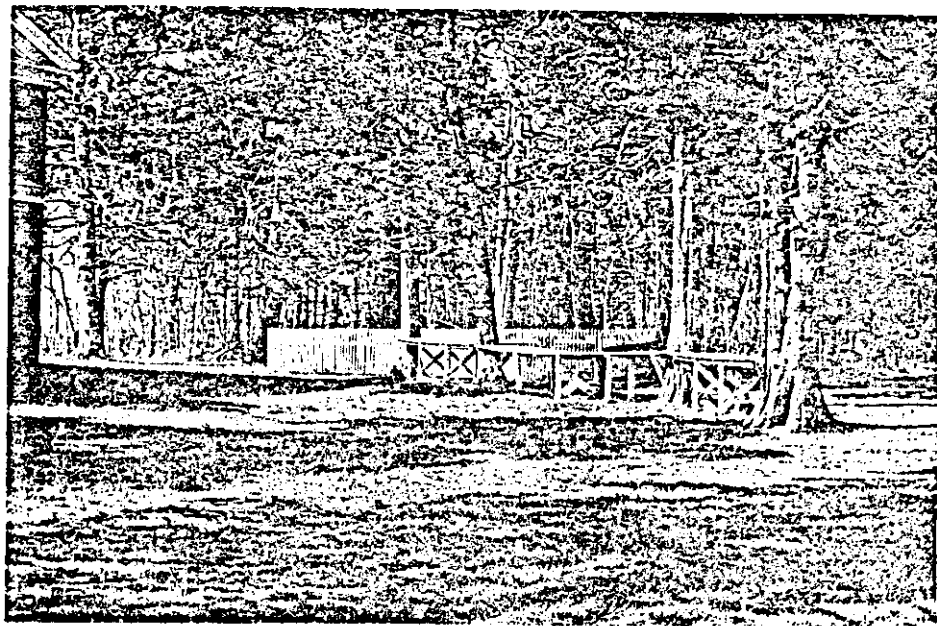


Pulpit

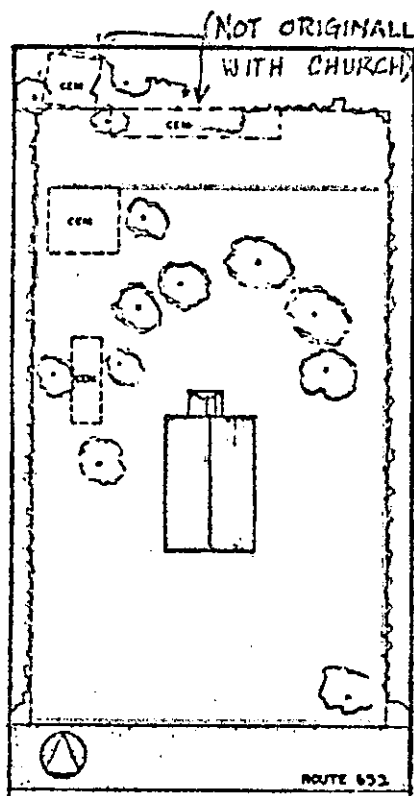


Old Funeral Door, East Wall

Cemetery Site



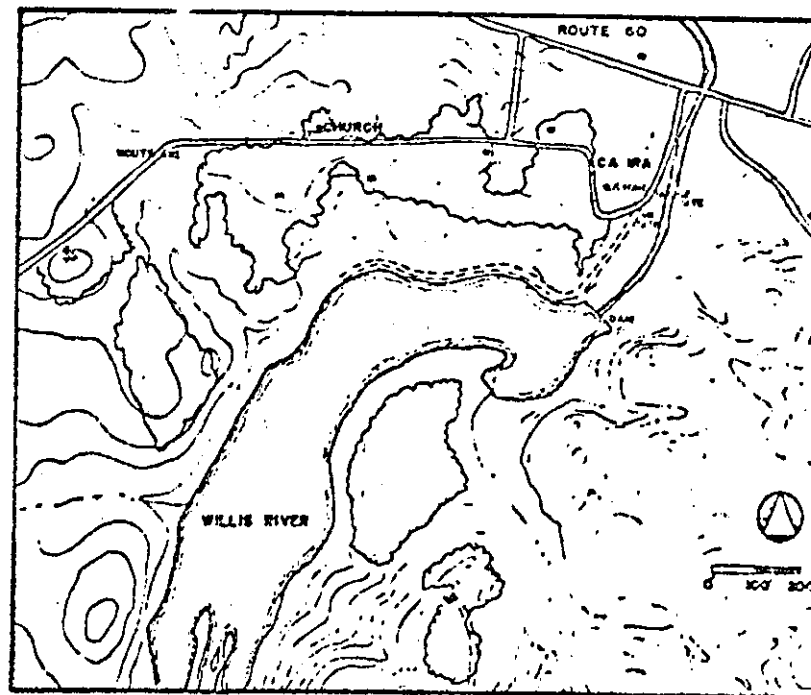
# GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH



BEGUN IN 1840 AND EVIDENTLY COMPLETED IN THE EARLY PART OF 1843 GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH IS LOCATED ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF THE MAIN ROAD FROM CA IRA TO BUCKINGHAM COURTHOUSE. THE TWO THIRDS OF AN ACRE LOT IS BOUNDED ON THE WEST BY THE LINE SEPARATING IT FROM MCASHAM'S OLD STEMMERY LOT, AND ON THE EAST BY THE WESTERN CROSS STREET OF THE TOWN OF CA IRA.

SKETCH MAP - NOT TO SCALE  
SHOWING APPROXIMATE REGISTER BOUNDARY

THIS CLASS PROJECT WAS UNDERTAKEN BY THE SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA UNDER THE DIRECTION OF K. EDWARD LAY, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ARCHITECTURE, MEASURED AND DRAWN FALL SEMESTER 1973. MARY GARY AND DIANE ENGLE, ARCHITECTURE STUDENTS.



DRAWN BY JAY ENGLE

SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE, UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

UNDER DIRECTION OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

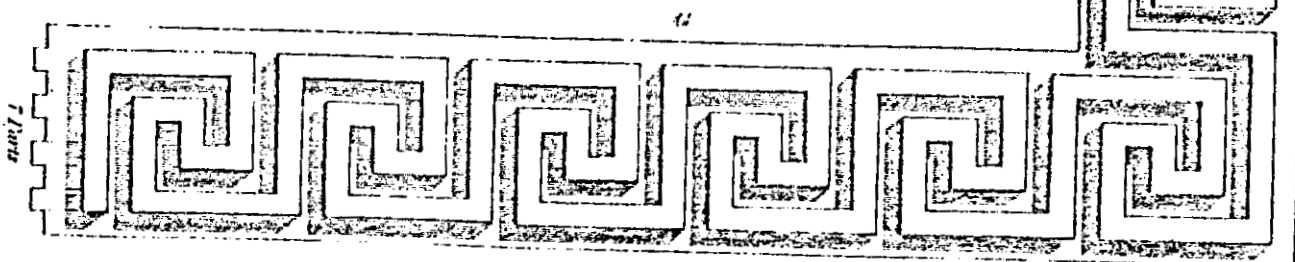
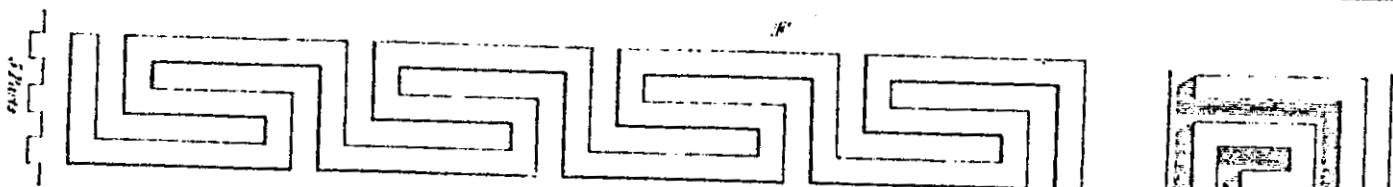
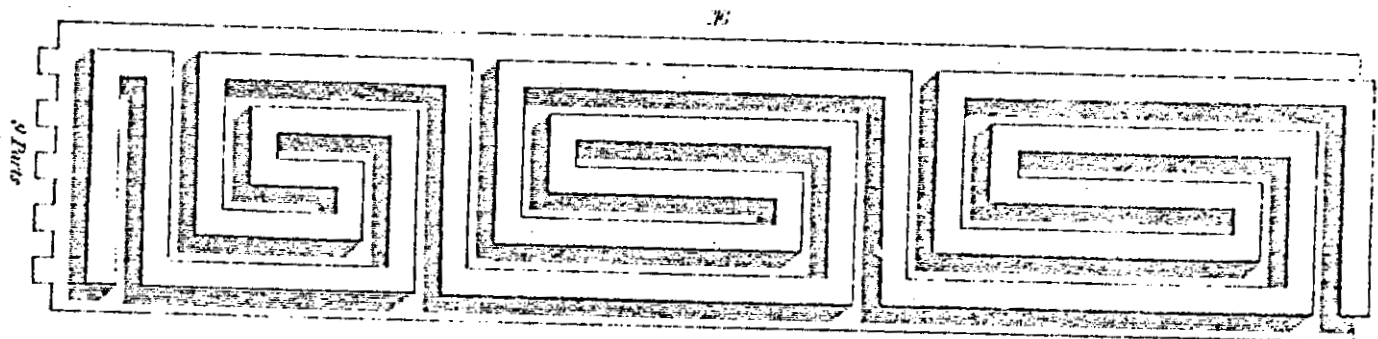
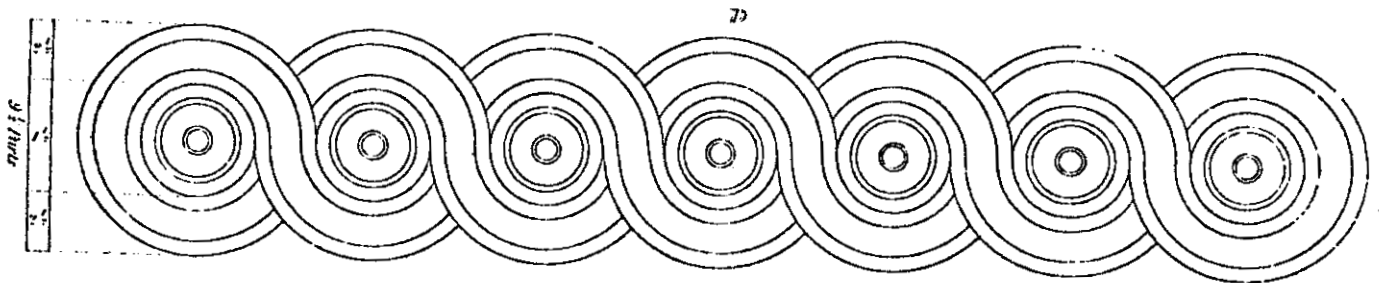
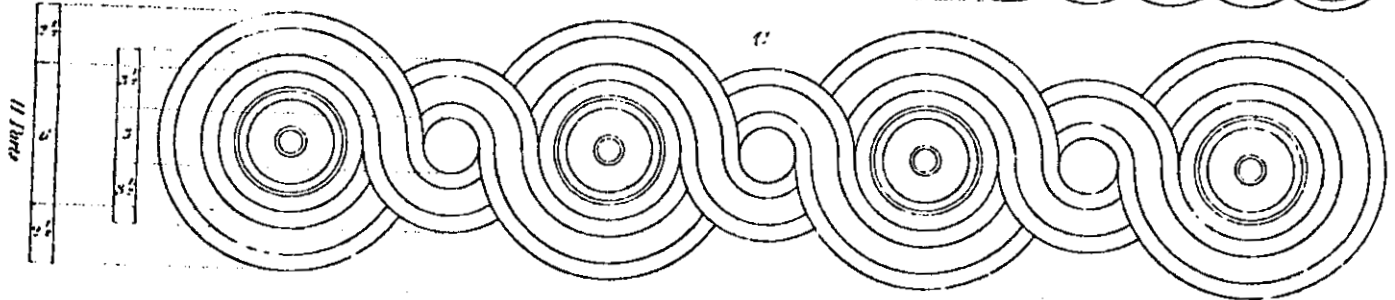
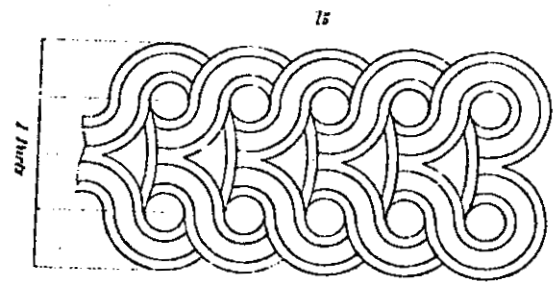
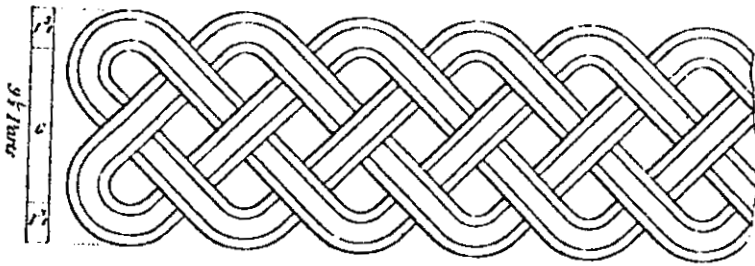
NAME AND LOCATION OF STRUCTURE  
GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

CA IRA, CUMBERLAND COUNTY, VIRGINIA

SURVEY NO.

VA-970

HISTORIC AMERICAN  
BUILDINGS SURVEY  
SHEET 1 OF 6 SURVEY



VIRGINIA HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION  
221 GOVERNOR STREET  
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA 23219

GRACE CHURCH, CA IPA  
Cumberland County, Va.  
Credit: Va. Historic Landmarks Commission  
1968  
Neg. Filed: Va. State Library, Richmond, Va.  
  
View from South  
491  
1 of 1

5359 11 SW  
(DILLWIN)

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

COMMONWEALTH  
DIVISION OF MINES  
JAMES L. CALVER, S.  
5359 11  
(GOLD H)

78°22'30"  
37°30'

733000m E

734

735

20'

736

737

AMHERST 4.3 MI.  
7 MI. TO U.S. 15

USGS 7.5' quadrangle (scale:1:24,000)  
Hillcrest, Va. 1968

GRACE CHURCH, CA IRA, Cumberland County, Va.  
UTM References:

17/736170/4151640

4152000m N

4151

BUCKINGHAM CO  
CUMBERLAND CO

Payne

River

Ca Ira Pond

Cem

Grace Ch

Ca Ira

BM 278

Oak Hill  
Lake

CUM



# SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
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<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1840-43

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Col. Valentine Parrish w/ Albert Mann

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Grace Church, Ca Ira, survives as a charming illustration of the stylistic hybridization that occurred with Romantic Revivalism in the antebellum period. Unlike many of its similarly imaginative contemporaries, Grace Church is devoid of architectural naivete and is at once a skillful blending of Roman, Greek, and Gothic Revival elements, all executed with superb craftsmanship. Its temple form and fine brickwork are an offspring of Virginia's Jeffersonian tradition, while its Greek and Gothic details are adapted from builders' pattern books. The church was erected in 1840-43 by Valentine Parrish, a local master builder, and is one of the only remaining buildings of Ca Ira, a town laid out in 1787 which prospered briefly in the antebellum period as a milling and tobacco warehouse center.

The General Assembly established Ca Ira in 1796 on a site overlooking the Willis River in Cumberland County. The town probably took its name from a popular French revolutionary marching song meaning "it will go" or "the Revolution will triumph." Since popular enthusiasm for the French Revolution was especially exuberant in Virginia throughout the 1790s, it is plausible that this enthusiasm found expression in the naming of the new town. Ca Ira failed to develop until the completion of the Willis River canal in 1825. Besides ridding the town of an unhealthful pond, the canal facilitated the shipment of tobacco from Prince Edward and Charlotte counties to Richmond and Petersburg via the James River. Commerce quickened as a class of merchants arose in the town. Martin's Gazetteer of 1836 described Ca Ira as a post village with a population of 210. According to the gazetteer, the town then contained forty dwellings, three stores, a merchant mill processing approximately thirty thousand bushels of wheat annually, a tobacco warehouse, two taverns, and a masonic hall.

Completion of Grace Church in 1843 not only gave Ca Ira its largest and most distinguished building, it also brought new life to surrounding Littleton parish, which had been inactive since 1813. Bishop William Meade reported in 1857 that the church was "in constant use," serving both the town community and the neighboring Cumberland plantations. The pillars of the church were the most prominent families of the town: the John C. Pages, Alexander Trents, Cary Blantons, Goodrich Wilsons, and Valentine Parrishes, who donated the lot on which the new church was erected. The transformation of Littleton from an inactive to a flourishing parish reflected in a small mirror the larger revival of the Episcopal Church in Virginia in the decades just prior to the Civil War.

Builder as well as benefactor of Grace Church, Valentine Parrish worked with Dabney Cosby on the Jeffersonian-style Goochland County Courthouse of 1826

(See Continuation Sheet #1)

## DESCRIPTION

### CONDITION

☒ EXCELLENT  
☐ GOOD  
☐ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED  
☐ RUINS  
☐ UNEXPOSED

### CHECK ONE

☒ UNALTERED  
☐ ALTERED

### CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE  
☐ MOVED      DATE \_\_\_\_\_

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Grace Church is located on the north side of Route 632, just south of U.S. Route 60, in the middle of Cumberland County. The brick structure was constructed 1840-43 and is a well-preserved example of Roman, Greek, and Gothic Revival elements on a temple-form country church. Its outside dimensions are approximately 32' x 48' with a small vestry attached at the rear.

The church sits on a brick foundation with air holes for ventilation. The walls are constructed of even-colored 3" x 8" unglazed, hand-packed bricks with very precise mortar joints. The south (front) and east sides are both of Flemish bond, the north side is of five-course American bond, and the west side is of four-course American bond with Flemish variant. The mortar joints preserve original penciling.

Triple-hung windows with 12/12 sash are found on all elevations. The windows are hung with louvred shutters and 8" rectilinear moldings topped by ramped lintels. The lintels have 6"-square corner blocks. Above the entrance is a lancet transom with intersecting tracery, and the window in the tympanum is similarly treated. The first bay on the east side is a jib window which is said to have been used for funerals. A handsome cove cornice runs along the perimeter of the roof and defines the front and rear pediments. The roof is covered by Buckingham slate. Two small chimneys are later additions, as is a small wooden cross above the pediment.

The interior is a single room with the vestry in a later addition behind the sanctuary. The nave has two main aisles formed by the placement of the original pews. The freestanding set of center pews is larger than the side pews, which are slightly angled and attached to the side walls. The gallery on the south wall has one center aisle and two side aisles. Two Doric columns and pilasters on the side walls support the gallery. Above the columns is a dentiled entablature topped by a railing with turned balusters. An enclosed stairway on the east side of the building leads to the gallery. On one side of the stair is beaded diagonal paneling. There is no stair rail.

On the north wall is the pulpit, enclosed in a U-shaped communion rail with rectangular rungs. The pulpit is paneled and has a bold Greek fret in the frieze, reflecting the use of plates 52, 63, and 64 of Asher Benjamin's Practical House Carpenter (1830) in its design. A marble baptismal font is located to the east of the pulpit.

Still in place in the church are two elaborate cast-iron, wood-burning stoves, bearing the maker's name, "Leibrandt & McDowell, Philadelphia & Baltimore." A paneled dado with a chair rail runs the perimeter of the main room. The flooring is of unfinished wood, and the walls and ceilings are plastered.

A small cemetery is located to the rear (north) of the church, which is sited in a hilly, wooded area just above Ca Ira pond on the Willis River.

RCC

(See Continuation Sheet #1)

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Calendar of Virginia State Papers, Vol. 9, p. 223 (1801) p. 351 (1803).  
Cary, Mary and Engle, Diane. "Grace Episcopal Church." Class Project, University of Virginia Architecture School, Fall 1973.  
Cumberland County Deed Book 25, p. 494 (1843); Land Tax Books, 1782-1850; Legislative Petitions 1814-1850; Will Books 12, 13.  
Minutes of the Grace Episcopal Church. Ca Ira Restoration Association, 1928-31, 1954-78.  
Plat of the Ca Ira Canal, 1825, Virginia State Library. (See Continuation Sheet #2)

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 2/3 acre

QUADRANGLE NAME Hillcrest, Virginia

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A 117 736170 4151640

B         

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

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D         

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### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at a point on N side of Route 632 about 1100' W of intersection with Route 652; thence extending about 100' W along said side; thence extending about 250' N; thence extending about 100' E; thence extending about 250' S to N side of Route 632, point of origin.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff

ORGANIZATION

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

STREET & NUMBER

221 Governor Street

CITY OR TOWN

Richmond

DATE

June 1980

TELEPHONE

(804) 786-3144

STATE

Virginia 23219

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL   

STATE X

LOCAL   

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE Tucker Hill, Executive Director  
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE JUN 17 1980

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NCRS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED  
DATE ENTERED

Grace Church, Ca Ira, Cumberland County, Virginia

CONTINUATION SHEET

#1

ITEM NUMBER 6, 7, & 8 PAGE 1

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS:**

- (2) Historic American Buildings Survey  
1973 Federal  
Library of Congress/Washington, D. C.
- (3) Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey  
1968, 1969, 1980 State  
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission  
221 Governor Street  
Richmond, Virginia 23219

**7. DESCRIPTION - BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:**

The nominated property consists of two-thirds of an acre (approximately) and includes the church cemeteries and church building. The acreage follows the lines of the original deed as recorded in the Cumberland County Deed Book 25, p. 494 (November 12, 1843):

a certain lot or parcel of ground adjoining the town of Ca Ira on the West, and bounded as follows. Orig. on the South by the Main road from Ca Ira to Buckingham Ct. House, West by the line separating it from McAshan's Old Stemmer Lot, on which the fence now runs North by the road leading into said stemmer and, East by the Western Crop Street of the town of Ca Ira, it being the lot, as now enclosed whereon the New Episcopal Church, called Grace Church, has been recently erected, containing about two thirds of an acre, together with all the appurtenances thereunto belonging.

RCC

**8. SIGNIFICANCE:**

and is listed with Cosby as "architect" on the courthouse cornerstone. Cosby had earlier worked under Thomas Jefferson at the building of the University of Virginia, but Parrish's connection to Jefferson is unknown. The use of Greek Revival-style architraves and the design of the pulpit in Grace Church

(See Continuation Sheet #2)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

Grace Church, Ca Ira, Cumberland County, Virginia

CONTINUATION SHEET

#2

ITEM NUMBER 8 & 9 PAGE 2, 1

8. SIGNIFICANCE:

show the influence of Asher Benjamin's Practical House Carpenter of 1830. The pulpit design is taken specifically from Plate 52 and Plates 63-64 of Benjamin's pattern book. One of the Parrish's slaves, Albert Mann, is said to have been responsible for the woodwork and framing. Parrish was a leading citizen of Cumberland County during the 1840s and 1850s. He signed and presented several petitions to the General Assembly on questions of tolls and economic aid to the county.

Ca Ira reached its zenith in the mid-1850s (when the town incorporated its first and only bank), only to decline rapidly in population after the Civil War. Grace Church fell into desuetude and, like many other buildings in the town, was abandoned at the end of the 19th century. Listed as a "post hamlet" in the Lippincott World Gazetteer in 1906, the town at the beginning of the 20th century had only two stores, a post office, and a few residences, apart from the abandoned church building and the remnants of a tobacco warehouse, three blacksmith shops, a saw mill, a grist mill, and a miller's house. Except for the church building, only the miller's house stands today.

Not until 1928 did descendants of the original congregation of Grace Church organize the Ca Ira Restoration Society, which raised the funds to rehabilitate and restore the church soon thereafter. After blocking an attempt by the Diocese to sell the property, the Society in 1954 successfully reinstituted the annual homecoming services which had been held regularly in the 1930s. The Society has since maintained the church and grounds in good repair. To preserve its present status as a "shrine" of the Diocese of Southern Virginia, Grace Church must hold at least one religious service a year.

MLP/RCC/RAC

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Benjamin, Asher. Practical House Carpenter. 1830.

Lippincott World Gazetteer. 1906.

Martin, Joseph. A New and Comprehensive Gazetteer of Virginia and the District of Columbia. Charlottesville, Va., 1836.

5359 III SW  
(DILLWIN)

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

COMMONWEALTH  
DIVISION OF MINES  
JAMES L. CALVER, S.  
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USGS 7.5' quadrangle (scale:1:24000)  
Hillcrest, Va. 1968

GRACE CHURCH, CA IRA, Cumberland County, Va.  
UTM References:

17/736170/4151640

4152000m N

BUCKINGHAM CO  
CUMBERLAND CO

Payne

River

Ca Ira Pond

Willis

Oak Hill  
Lake

CUM

Cem

Grace Ch

Ca Ira

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